

4.12. MAINTENANCE OF SEWAGE FACILITIES

Management Measure for Maintenance of Sewage Facilities:

Ensure that sewage pumpout facilities are maintained in operational condition and encourage their use.

Management Measure Description

Boaters are becoming increasingly aware of the need to protect the environment and of their role in maintaining healthy waters. Boaters today want to do what is proper for the environment, and maintaining sewage facilities in good operating condition at all times so that they are always accessible to boaters helps boaters achieve their environmental goals. This measure is important because it is the simplest and most effective way to prevent the failure of sewage facilities and to ensure their availability to boaters.

Sewage collection facilities, including sewage pumpout stations and portable toilet dump stations, help reduce the release of untreated sewage into marina and surface waters. Boaters can use the facilities, however, only when the facilities are operating properly. Nonfunctioning sewage collection and disposal facilities present a serious obstacle to boaters whose holding tanks are full, and in such circumstances boaters are left with few choices for sewage disposal—travel elsewhere to find an operable pumpout or dump station, discharge sewage directly overboard, or cease using their boat toilets. The first of these options is very inconvenient; the second is illegal in no discharge zones and legal otherwise only through an approved marine sanitation device in appropriate waters; and the third would mean “stop using the boat” to many boaters. Also, an inoperable pumpout or dump station at one marina can create an excessive demand at stations in the same area that are operable. Long lines at the pumpouts can result, and these can be discouraging and tempt people to discharge illegally. Finally, if pumpouts are free to those with slips at a marina and the pumpout at that marina is inoperable,

patrons will not likely be pleased with having to pay for a pumpout elsewhere.

Applicability

This management measure is applicable to marinas with sewage disposal facilities.

Best Management Practices

- ◆ *Regularly inspect and maintain sewage facilities.*

Sewage disposal facilities can be kept operating properly with regular inspection and maintenance. Routine maintenance, performed according to instructions that come with the unit, can be done by marina staff, with major problems referred to qualified service personnel. Routine inspections of marina waste holding tanks and secondary containment areas will ensure their integrity. If septic tanks and leach fields are used for final disposal, the tanks will function most efficiently and at least cost if they are pumped out regularly to prevent overflows and clogging.

Boatyards and marina facilities capable of servicing and repairing boat toilet and holding tank systems can promote annual marine sanitation device inspections and maintenance by offering this service to boat owners. During the off season or winter storage months, this service can generate additional income for a marina. It is also one way that marinas can play a proactive role in boater education and the promotion of environmental awareness.

- ◆ *Disinfect the suction connection of a pumpout station (stationary or portable) by dipping it into or spraying it with disinfectant.*

Although not a practice to protect water quality, part of pumpout station maintenance is protecting pumpout operators, whether marina staff or boaters, against infection and illness. Risk of contact with bacteria or viruses while handling the pumpout nozzle can be minimized by providing a pail that contains water and a nontoxic disinfectant, such as common bleach, next to the pumpout station. The nozzle end can be dipped into the pail immediately following each use. Care should be taken to ensure that the disinfectant solution does not spill into marina waters. The mildest, least harmful disinfectant that will do the job is the best choice for this purpose. Use of the disinfectant solution can be added to instructions provided on how to use the pumpout.

◆ *Maintain convenient, clean, dry, and pleasant restroom facilities in the marina.*

An effective way to encourage boaters to dispose of their sewage properly and not to discharge it overboard is to have good shoreside restroom facilities available for customers and guests. Surveys have shown that a factor important to boaters when selecting a marina is the cleanliness, condition, and convenience of its restrooms. The surveys show that boaters prefer to use restrooms that are

- Clean and dry
- Close to docks and accessible at all hours
- Well maintained and brightly lit
- Free of insects
- Amply supplied with toilet paper and hand towels
- Equipped with private showers and dressing rooms
- Safe

◆ *Maintain a dedicated fund and issue a contract for pumpout and dump station repair and maintenance.*

Marinas and launch ramps can establish dedicated funds specifically to maintain pumpouts and dump stations in continuous operational condition. If a CVA grant was used to purchase and install the sewage station, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

requires that pumpout equipment be maintained in operational condition for boater use.

BMP Summary Table 12 summarizes the BMPs for Sewage Facility Maintenance mentioned in this guidance.

BMP Summary Table 12. MAINTENANCE OF SEWAGE FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

MANAGEMENT MEASURE: Ensure that sewage pumpout facilities are maintained in operational condition and encourage their use.

APPLICABILITY: Marinas with sewage discharge facilities.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS: When faced with nonfunctioning sewage collection and disposal facilities, boaters whose holding tanks are full have three choices: (1) go elsewhere to find an operable pumpout or dump station, which is inconvenient; (2) discharge sewage directly overboard, which is illegal in no discharge zones and legal otherwise only through an approved marine sanitation device in nearshore waters; or (3) cease using their boat toilets, which to some would mean "stop using the boat." Also, one inoperable pumpout may overload another one nearby, tempting boaters to discharge illegally, particularly if the alternative pumpout is not free or charges a higher fee.

MAINTENANCE OF SEWAGE FACILITIES PRACTICES

Best Management Practice Examples	Marina Location & Usage	Benefits to Marina	Projected Environmental Benefits	Initial Cost Estimate	Annual Operation & Maintenance Cost Estimate	Notes
Regularly inspect and maintain sewage facilities	Marina sewage collection facilities; universally recommended	HIGH; regular inspections help detect small maintenance needs before they become big problems and cost more to repair	MODERATE; properly operating pumpouts help reduce sewage pollution	LOW	LOW to MODERATE	Requires regular inspection; should keep records of each inspection
Disinfect the suction connection of a pumpout station (stationary or portable) by dipping it into or spraying it with disinfectant	Marina pumpout station; universally recommended	HIGH; protects pumpout operators from infection	LOW; be careful to avoid spilling disinfectant into waterbody	LOW	LOW	
Maintain convenient, clean, dry, and pleasant restroom facilities in the marina	Marina; universally recommended	HIGH; clean bathrooms attract customers; marina surveys show that a good restroom is a major reason why boaters select a marina	HIGH; good restrooms get used, reducing boat toilet use and thus overboard discharge	MODERATE to HIGH	LOW to MODERATE	Restrooms are also recommended at boat launch ramps where feasible
Maintain a dedicated fund and issue a contract for pumpout and dump station repair and maintenance	Marinas; generally recommended	HIGH; facilities funded by a CVA grant are required to be properly maintained; an annual service contract ensures regular maintenance and proper functioning	HIGH; reduces sewage discharge that can result when a pumpout is out of service	LOW	MODERATE	

